

Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



CHANDOS PARK

July 2022



Roland
Callingham
Foundation

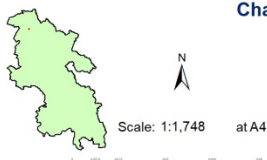


HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY



Chandos Park: boundary of historic designed landscape interest

Produced by the Council Archaeology Service
July 2022



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Scale: 1:1,748 at A4



Chandos Park: 2020 aerial photograph

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July 2022



**Buckinghamshire
Gardens Trust**

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Project

This site dossier has been prepared as part of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) Research and Recording Project, begun in 2014. This site is one of several hundred designed landscapes county-wide identified by Bucks County Council in 1998 (including Milton Keynes District) as potentially retaining evidence of historic interest, as part of the Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review project carried out for English Heritage (now Historic England) (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not definitive and further parks and gardens may be identified as research continues or further information comes to light.

Content

BGT has taken the Register Review list as a sound basis from which to select sites for appraisal as part of its Research and Recording Project for designed landscapes in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundaries). For each site a dossier is prepared by volunteers trained by BGT in appraising designed landscapes.

Each dossier includes the following for the site:

- A site boundary mapped on the current Ordnance Survey to indicate the extent of the main part of the surviving designed landscape, also a current aerial photograph.
- A statement of historic significance based on the four Interests outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework and including an overview.
- A written description, derived from documentary research and a site visit, based on the format of Historic England *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest 2nd edn.*
- A map showing principal views and features.

The area within the site boundary represents the significant coherent remains of the designed landscape. It does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.

NOTE: Sites are not open to the public unless advertised elsewhere.

Supporters and Acknowledgements

The project was funded by BGT, with significant grants from the Finnis Scott Foundation, the Roland Callingham Foundation, BCC (since April 2020 part of Buckinghamshire Council) and various private donors. Buckinghamshire Council also provided significant funding, and help in kind including current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record. The project is supported by The Gardens Trust.

The Trust thanks the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much time and effort to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Further information is available from: www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk

COUNTY:	Buckinghamshire	Chandos Park, Buckingham
DISTRICT:	Formerly Aylesbury Vale	MK18 1AL
PARISH:	Buckingham	HER NO: -
OS REF:	SP696 3345	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

Chandos Park, named after the Marquess of Chandos, is a late example of a typical urban public park. It lies at the heart of Buckingham, forming one of the town's principal public open spaces. Opened in 1966 on a former recreation ground in an industrial area of the town, it comprises lawns and a wide variety of mature ornamental trees together with sports areas, varied other amenities, picnic areas and walks along the river Great Ouse, enjoying views of the historic town setting rising above its opposite bank.

Artistic

The public park is laid out on a former recreation ground for an adjacent factory. It has a mixture of formal and serpentine paths amongst lawns and a wide range of ornamental trees, including a riverside walk by the picturesque River Great Ouse overlooking an attractive weir called The Flish.

Historic

Occupation in the town of Buckingham dates from at least 650. It became important on the main routes from London to the Midlands and from Oxford to Cambridge, including latterly as a coaching centre. It became the county town of Buckinghamshire in the C10. It was issued royal charters, firstly in 1554, by Mary I, initiating two annual fairs which continue today. In 1684 a charter by Charles II established the current market day. The River Great Ouse, the Grand Union Canal, and the coming of the railway in the 1850s offered excellent trade routes. The railway closed in 1964. Before the development of Chandos Park, the land was a recreation ground for a factory and the surrounding area, including the dairy, was an important part of the town's economy.

Archaeology

The site has the potential for evidence from phases of occupation since at least the C7, particularly the recent history relating to its former uses, before the park layout.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Early History

Buckingham is an ancient market town. Situated at the very north of the county it was an important coaching centre on the main routes from London to the Midlands and from Oxford to Cambridge and was given the title of county town of Buckinghamshire in the C10. It lost its status to Aylesbury in the C16 (*History of the Town of Buckingham*) but regained it in the mid-C18 when Lord Cobham of Stowe built the landmark gaol on Buckingham Market Hill for the summer assizes with circuit judges and a jury in attendance. By 1849, Aylesbury had built a new County Hall with improved prisoner facilities thus regaining the summer assizes and the status of county town (*History of the Town of Buckingham*).

Historically, Buckingham's economy included leather and tannery yards, wool and corn mills, a quarry and cottage lace making. This latter craft was, according to legend, introduced to the local women in the town by Catherine of Aragon. In 1856, Thomas Ricketts established an iron foundry in Buckingham in what is now the Chandos Road building. A visionary and designer, Thomas Ricketts and his workers created the first steam driven car of Britain (*The Motor Museum in Miniature*). Interestingly, the steam car with Thomas Ricketts and Lord Caithness aboard appeared on a Cuban stamp, dated 2008. This was a series of stamps celebrating vintage vehicles (Appendix 1). Despite the interest from people such as Lord Caithness and the Duke of Sutherland, plus orders coming in from abroad and locally, the business collapsed within 4 years.

Thew, Hooker & Gilby subsequently moved their dairy company from Verney Junction, six miles away into what had been the old iron foundry in the late 1850s, due to the proximity of the railway station. The land surrounding the dairy company ultimately formed Chandos Park (Article *Buckingham and Winslow Advertiser* 2014, E. Grimsdale).

The milk factory became known affectionately as Hooker's. Malted Milk was invented there and during World War I tins of nutritious Bivouac Chocolate were distributed to British soldiers. United Dairies took over the business in the 1920s. The milk business was cutting edge and developed products to include, condensed, peptonised, cocoa, and malted milks. Hooker's in Buckingham claimed to be the birthplace of Ovaltine and Horlicks.

The arrival of the University in the town in 1973 has given it a new lease of life with investment in the infrastructure with much change in recent years. It is the oldest of Britain's independent universities and was officially opened in February 1976 by the Rt. Hon. Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP, as former Secretary of State for Education. In 2020, the University had a student population of 3300 students from more than 70 countries. (<https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/history>).

Chandos Park

Before the development of Chandos Park, the land and surrounding area was an important part of Buckingham's economy. The areas and buildings surrounding Chandos Park have are linked to several of historical Buckingham trades, the most notable of which was the dairy factory. This factory benefited greatly from being adjacent to and connected with the railway and local station (which closed in 1964). In addition to the dairy, Hooker's diversified into pig production on a nearby site, by the River Great Ouse. This pig production factory continued working into the 1960s.

The land (now Chandos Park) adjacent to the north-west and north-east of the milk factory became the recreation ground for its employees (Appendix 1). Community events were held there. One noteworthy event was the pantomime production of Robinson Crusoe reported in the *Daily Express*

in 1904 - then again in the local *Advertiser*. The pantomime was interrupted by a flash flood just as "Robinson was paddling his raft" so the 500 strong audience and the cast were forced to retreat to slightly higher ground as the River Great Ouse spilled over its banks. The audience was asked if they wanted to abandon the production, but such was the stalwart Buckingham character they chose to carry on (pers. comm. Ed Grimsdale).

Another event in the recreation ground in 1951 celebrated the Festival of Britain with a Physical Training (PT) display by students of Buckingham County Secondary School (Appendix 1).

In 1938 the Borough of Buckingham drew up proposals under the Town and Country Planning Act 1932 which required all authorities to set out schemes for rural and urban protection (Appendix 1). The proposed plan showed the land now known as Chandos Park as 'Private Open Space' as it still belonged to the dairy factory (County Planning Office). No development of the proposals occurred, probably due to the onset of World War II.

The dairy factory closed in 1964 and the factory became a store for Cementone paint materials. Buckingham Borough Council purchased the area in 1966 for development of a public park. This development included the already established bowling club which had originally been laid out in 1932 for the employees of Wiltshire United Dairies.

Chandos Park, named after the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, opened in 1966. Situated within Buckingham's conservation area, the small park is mainly grass land with a variety of trees and offers a number of amenities, picnic areas and walks alongside the river Great Ouse. The Park forms part of the Circular Walk in the Buckingham Heartlands and is one of the principal public open spaces in Buckingham South Wards forming part of the River Park Walk (Heartlands Management Plan 2018/19). The Chandos Park Bowling Club was founded and named in 1967.

With Local Authority boundary changes in 1974, ownership of the park passed to Aylesbury Vale District Council. Then in 2003, Buckingham Town Council took it back from AVDC for £1, along with the Brackley Road Cemetery and Bourton Park (also £1 each). In 2020 Buckinghamshire became a unity authority and Chandos Park became its responsibility.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM SETTING

Chandos Road is a residential area leading south/south-west from the London Road which leads into the centre of Buckingham. The properties are mainly individual designed detached post-war properties on both sides; a row of Victorian villas stands closer to the park entrance. One of the campuses of The Royal Latin School is situated opposite the main entrance to Chandos Park. Further south-west along this road on the right is St Bernadine's Catholic Church and adjacent is the Chandos Road Building, once Hooker's Dairy.

Buckingham Heartlands follows the River Great Ouse and forms part of Buckingham's central 'Green Lung' providing a green circular walk beginning at the northeast side of the town. The level 1.8ha. site lies at the south-west of the town at the most southerly point of the Heartlands' walk.

Upstream of the river at the Station Road end of the park is an attractive weir called The Flish - an obsolete term for a funnel or hopper shaped box used as part of a processing pool, also another name for a stagnant pool (Appendix 2). This was used by Tanlaw Mill which can be seen from the park, to maintain water levels in the Mill leat (watercourse).

It is bordered by the River Great Ouse to the north-west, Woolpack Bridge to the north-east and Chandos Road to the south-east. The south boundary is bordered by mature hedging separating the park from a private residence. Further towards the river a wooden foot bridge crosses the river and marks the boundary between Buckingham Town Council land and Buckingham University land. Paths for the circular walk continue south-west over this footbridge into the University's Park towards and including the Flosh.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The main entrance to the park is situated in Chandos Road 200m south-west leading from the London Road. A pair of black wrought iron gates, with a flat iron sculpture of the Buckinghamshire Swan on each, frame the entrance.

The Woolpack Bridge entrance at the north-east of the park is reached along a narrow path from Ford Street. The path from this bridge is named after Chris Nicholls (died 1968) who played football for Buckingham Town and continued as an active supporter until he died (pers. comm. Ed Grimsdale). Alongside this walk is Ford Meadow, beyond Chandos Park. Buckingham Town F.C., formed in 1883, quickly adopted Ford Meadow as its home ground. The Club retained possession of it until 2011 when the University of Buckingham bought it. This path runs alongside the River Great Ouse, widening into the main part of the park as it reaches the ball play area.

A third entrance is over The Lords Bridge situated just west of the wooden footbridge in the University land. Another footbridge enters from Station Road at the southernmost point of the Heartlands crossing the Flosh, offering a close-up view of the weir and its surroundings.

BULDINGS AND FEATURES

The following structures stand beyond the historic site boundary in the nearby setting and contribute to the park scenery and historical backdrop.

The Chandos Road Building, at the junction with Chandos Road and Station Road, is important in the history and development of the park. The building has had many uses, including an iron foundry manufacturing agricultural machinery and steam cars, a steam powered corn and cake mill, a dairy company and 'Buckingham marble' which was quarried nearby. Buckingham University bought the building in 1989.

The Tanlaw Mill, originally the Town Mill, stands north-west of the park overlooking the River Great Ouse running through the park. Here stood an ancient mill mentioned in the Domesday Book, which was a fulling mill by 1770 and by the late C19 a corn mill. It was purchased and converted by the University of Buckingham in 1981 (AVDC Buckingham Conservation Area Review).

The Woolpack Inn beyond at the north-east, Woolpack Bridge/ Ford Street entrance is one of the oldest public houses in Buckingham, standing in Well Street. During the C14 wool was sold from the Woolpack (*History of Buckingham*). It was a venue for auctions and inquests, including for drownings in the River Great Ouse (pers. com. Ed Grimsdale).

Sports and play facilities

Buckingham Lawn Tennis Club is situated to the right, just inside the Chandos Road entrance to the park. The Chandos Park Bowls Club is to the left, just inside the Chandos Road entrance. A multiuse games area is situated adjacent to the Tennis Club and children's play area in the centre of the park.

PERAMBULATION

Chandos Park features a variety of trees of varying ages. Starting just inside the main entrance off Chandos Road, immediately to the left, facing south-west, is a Western Red Cedar. The footpath then takes the walker past seven European Common Limes facing north, an avenue-like boundary to the tennis club. By 1964 (AP) these trees were well established although then there were eight.

Proceeding anticlockwise the lefthand path south leads past the bowls rink on the left with a row of Japanese Cherry trees screening the rink. A mature Horse Chestnut and two Willow trees stand towards the front of the play park. The play area and adjacent picnic area are on the left. Several Alders frame the play area while towards the boundary of the park south-east of the picnic area are a mature Lime, a Sycamore, and a Tulip tree. A Swamp Cypress is situated closer to the footpath, planted by the Buckingham Women's Institute to commemorate the centenary of the WI, 1915 – 2015 (<https://www.bucksfwi.org.uk/history-of-buckinghamshire-wis.html>).

Towards the south/south-east of the play park a mature shrubbery and hedging borders the private residence beyond, forming the south park boundary. This hedging of yews, laurels and weeping willows ends at the path where next to the wooden bridge, is a Swedish White Beam and two fine Sweet Gum trees or Liquid Ambers. The bridge forms the south/south-east boundary of the park.

The path north-east has the river on the left, with Ash trees lining the bank, an Indian Horse Chestnut and a Wild Cherry. West of the river on University land, Tanlaw Mill is an attractive backdrop.

West of the river, downstream from the mill, private residences and gardens leading down to the riverbank add an ornamental backdrop of trees and shrubs. In the background, west of these properties, the spire of the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul is visible.

Passing the footpath on the right leading back to the main entrance the path continues north-east onto the Chris Nicholls walk, leading back to the Ford Street entrance at Woolpack Bridge (1988).

REFERENCES

Online

AVDC Buckingham Conservation Area Review: available at <https://www.aylesburydc.gov.uk/buckingham-conservation-area>

Buckingham Town Council: available at <https://www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk/>

Buckingham University: available at <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/history>

Chandos Park Bowls Club: available at <http://www.chandosparkbowls.co.uk/community/>

Heritage Portal: available at <https://www.heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/map>

Historic England: available at <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1282713>

History of the Town of Buckingham: available at <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/history/town>

The WI Buckinghamshire: available at <https://www.bucksfwi.org.uk/history-of-buckinghamshire-wis.html>

The Motor Museum in Miniature: available at <http://www.themotormuseuminminiature.co.uk/inv-thomas-rickett.php>

Newspapers*Daily Express* 2 February 1904*Buckingham and Winslow Advertiser* 2014**Documents**

Heartlands Management Plan 2018

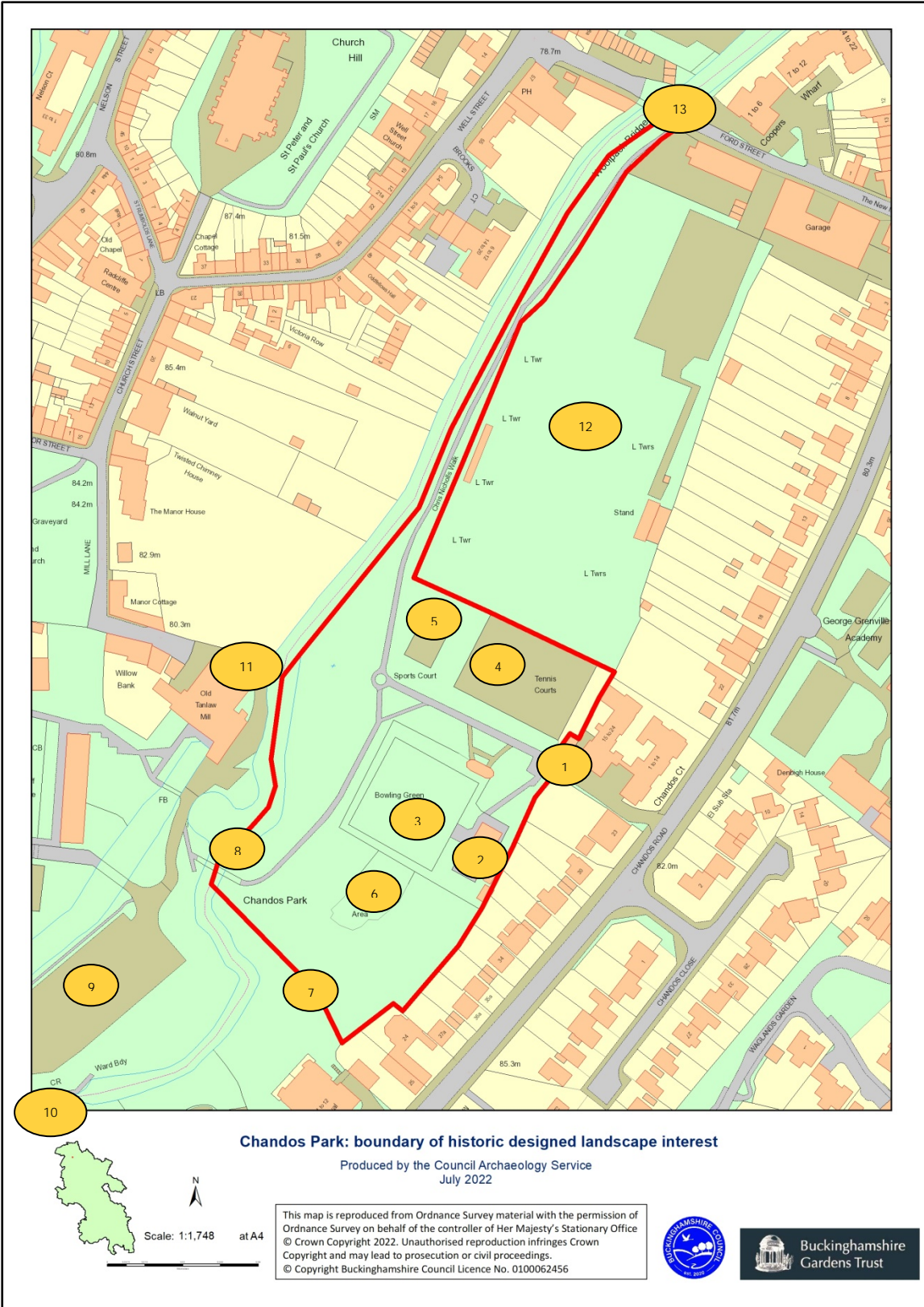
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Edward Grimsdale, Historian; Michael Hunt, local resident and tree expert;

Buckingham Town Council, Town Clerk's department.

Kathy Jackson and Penny Elvin June 2021. Edit SR July 22**FEATURES MAP****Key to numbered features**

1. Main Entrance – off Chandos Road	2. WCs
3. Bowling Club	4. Tennis courts
5. Sports Courts	6. Play Area
7. South Park boundary	8. Wooden Bridge
9. Buckingham University building	10. The Floss weir
11. Tanlaw Mill, now Buckingham University building	12. Buckingham University land – previously the town football club now known as Ford Meadow
13. The Woolpack Bridge	

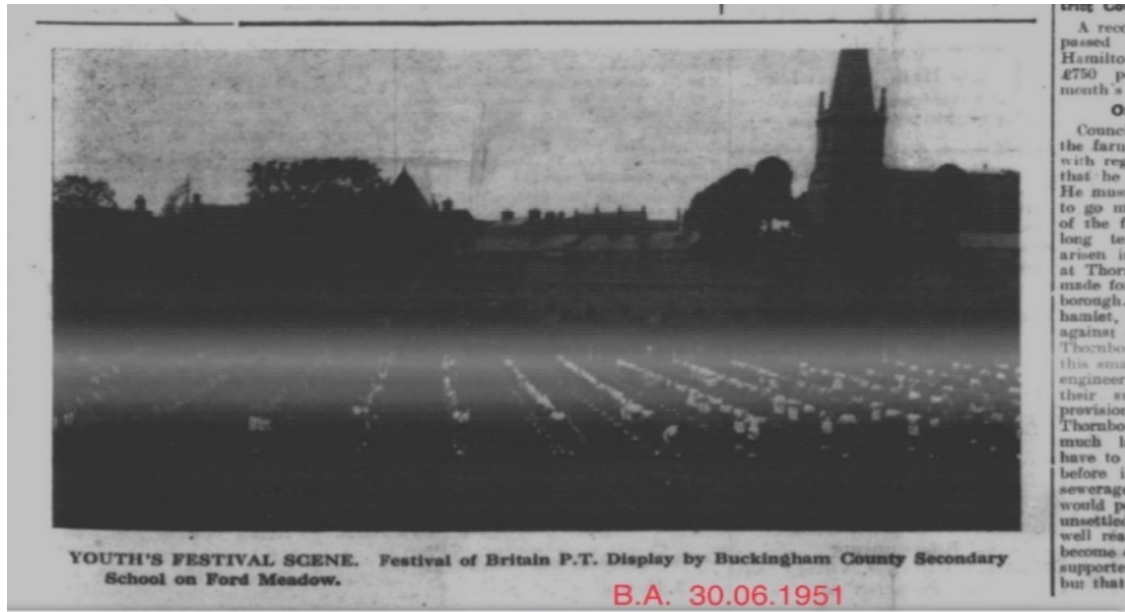


Appendix 1

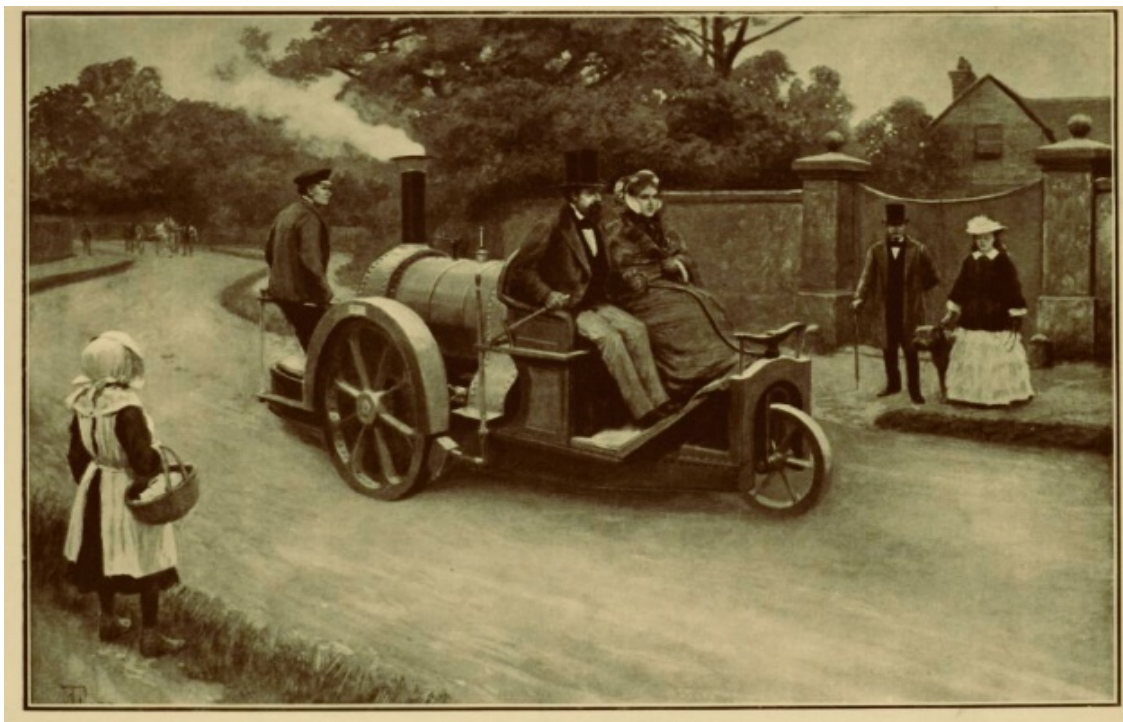
HISTORICAL MAP & IMAGES

Draft Scheme Proposals – plan 1938





Festival of Britain Demonstration in *Buckinghamshire Advertiser*, 30 June 1951 – courtesy of E. Grimsdale



Photograph replicating the Cuban stamp, showing Thomas Ricketts (stoker & Lord Caithness front) courtesy of E Grimsdale

Appendix 2

CURRENT IMAGES



European Limes just inside the main entrance



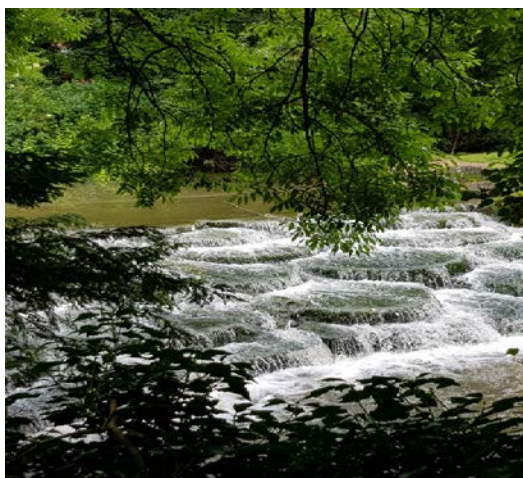
Wooden Bridge & Liquid Amber (M Hunt)



Approach to Wooden Bridge (M Hunt)



The Floss (K Jackson)



The Floss (K Jackson)



Swamp Cypress & WI Plaque (M Hunt))



Tulip Tree (M Hunt)



Indian Horse Chestnut (M Hunt)



Tanlaw Mill 2021 (K Jackson)



Tanlaw Mill 2021 (K Jackson)

Appendix 3

Some Notable Trees and Shrubs of Chandos Park

Common Alder-*Alnus Glutinosa*

Common Ash- *Fraxinus Excelsior*

Himalayan Birch - *Betula Utilis* var *Jacquemontii*

Sycamore- *Acer Pseudoplatanus*

Common Lime- *Tilia X Europaea*

Golden Weeping Willow- *Salix X Sepulcralis* 'Chrysocoma '

Crack Willow- *Salix Fragilis*

Horse Chestnut- *Aesculus Hippocastanum*

Indian Horse Chestnut- *Aesculus Indica* - flowers later than horse chestnut

Japanese Cherry- *Prunus X Judi* spring flowering

Lawsons Cypress - *Chamaecyparis Lawsoniana*

Mock Orange - *Philadelphus Coronarius* - - fabulous summer fragrance

Swamp Cypress- *Taxodium Distichum* - a deciduous conifer with fine autumn colour

Swedish Whitebeam- *Sorbus Intermedia* - fine autumn berries

Tulip Tree- *Liriodendron Tulipifera* - fine summer flowers on mature examples

Sweet Gum - *Liquidambar Styraciflua* - fine autumn colours

Western Red Cedar - *Thuja Plicata*

Wild Cherry (Gean, Mazzard) - *Prunus Avium* - spring flowering

Wild Cherry (Double Gean) -Double Flowered- *Prunus*